

SHABBAT, TORAH

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Parshas Vayakhel

Shabbat, Torah & Tabernacle

The overwhelming majority of our parashah describes the construction of the mishkan, but the parashah opens with the mitzvah of Shabbat. Rashi z"l writes that this teaches us that building the mishkan does not supersede Shabbat observance.

Why not? Also, why does the commandment to observe Shabbat have to precede the construction of the mishkan?

R' Avraham Yitzchak Kilav shlita (judge on the Yerushalayim rabbinical court) explains: The Midrash Yalkut Shimoni states, "From the beginning of the Torah to its end, there is only one parashah which begins with, 'Vayakhel' / 'he gathered an assembly.' [It is used here because] Hashem said, 'Gather large assemblies and teach them the laws of Shabbat so that future generations will learn to gather assemblies in the batei medrash on Shabbat to teach them halachot, so that My Name will be praised among My children'." [Until here from the midrash]

R' Kilav writes: Shabbat is the day of rest from physical labor, from the type of activity which belongs to the six days of action. Thus, another midrash refers to the Jewish People as the "pair" or "match" for Shabbat. All week long, we are not much different than the other nations; they work and we work. What highlights the uniqueness of the Jewish People is Shabbat. That is why we are enjoined to learn Torah in large gatherings on Shabbat, for the Torah is the life force of the Jewish People [the source of our uniqueness]. In order to merit a mishkan, in order to merit G-d's "resting" His Shechinah among us, we must study Torah.

Now we can understand why the mishkan may not be built on Shabbat and why the commandment to observe Shabbat has to precede the construction of the mishkan. Building the mishkan is a physical act, which has no place on the spiritual day. Indeed, only the act of sanctification which occurs on Shabbat makes that physical construction possible. (Aveni Bareket)

"Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and said to them: 'These are the things that Hashem commanded to do them: On six days work shall be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem; whoever does work on it shall be put to death. You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day'." (From our parashah - 35:1-2)

R' Yosef Eliyahu Henkin z"l (1891-1973) asks: Considering what follows, should not the Torah have said, "These are the things that Hashem commanded not to do them"? Also, why does the Torah use a phrase - "On six days work shall be done" - which implies that one is obligated to work?

He explains: Shabbat represents two competing concepts that man is charged with balancing: bitachon / recognition that everything that happens is in G-d's control, and hishtadlut / man's obligation to help himself. In the Aseret Ha'dibrot in Parashat Yitro (20:11) we read that Shabbat commemorates Creation. This alludes to man's obligation of hishtadlut, for we read at the end of the Creation section (Bereishit 2:3), "G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He abstained from all His work, which G-d had created to do." This verse teaches that the first Shabbat was the end of G-d's overt involvement with the world. From that point on, man would appear to be in charge. And, this verse conveys G-d's blessing that man will succeed when he uses G-d's creation "to do" for himself.

However, man can be led astray if he thinks that he alone is in control. Man must temper his hishtadlut with bitachon. Therefore, the Aseret Ha'dibrot in Parashat Va'etchanan (5:15) remind us that Shabbat also commemorates the Exodus. We were helpless slaves in Egypt, and only because G-d redeemed us did we become free. (This, explains R' Henkin, is why Shabbat is not one of the universal Noachide laws. Creation was an event that affected all of mankind, not only the Jews. However, without the Exodus, the message of Shabbat would be incomplete and even misleading.)

In this light, we can understand our verses. The Torah uses a phrase - "On six days work shall be done" - that implies that one is obligated to work because man is obligated to engage in some form of hishtadlut. "These are the things that Hashem commanded to do them," for if man relied on miracles alone, he would not even perform mitzvot. Instead, he would believe mistakenly that G-d's Will will be done whether he (man) lifts a finger or not.

Chazal teach that just as Shabbat is a sign of our covenant with Hashem, so are tefilin. [This is why we do not wear tefilin on Shabbat.] R' Henkin observes: The tefilin on the arm alludes to hishtadlut, for the arm is the instrument of action. The tefilin on the head alludes to bitachon, for the head is the seat of the mind, where trust in G-d develops. (Perushei Ivra, Part II, Ma'amar No. 1)

"The nesi'im brought the shoham stones and the stones for the settings for the ephod and the

breastplate; the spice and the oil, for illumination and for the anointment oil and the incense spices." (35:27-28)

While the simple translation of "nesi'im" is "leaders," the word also can be translated as "clouds." Specifically, the Aramaic translation Targum Yonatan writes: "Clouds of the heavens went to Gan Eden and brought from there olive oil for illumination."

R' Zvi Pesach Frank z"l (1872-1960; Rabbi of Yerushalayim) writes: There is a famous question: If the Chashmonaim found enough oil to burn for one day and it burned for eight days, then the miracle was only for seven days. If so, why is Chanukah eight days long?

R' Chaim "Brisker" Soloveitchik z"l is quoted as answering that, necessarily, only a fraction of the oil burned each day. Thus, a miracle occurred on each of the eight days when enough oil for only one-eighth of a day burned for a whole day. Had all of the oil burned on the first day and the jug been replenished miraculously, the oil burned on the remaining days would not have been olive oil; it would have been miracle oil.

R' Frank continues: R' Shlomo Yosef Zevin [z"l] (1888-1978; founder of the Encyclopedia Talmudit) observed that the Targum Yonatan on our verse seems to disprove R' Chaim Brisker's argument, since it records that the oil for the menorah was brought miraculously. However, R' Frank concludes, R' Zevin's question is not a strong one. On the verse (Bereishit 8:11), "The dove came back to [Noach] in the evening--and behold! It had plucked an olive leaf with its bill!" the Midrash Rabbah comments that the gates of Gan Eden were opened for the dove and it brought the olive branch from there. This indicates, writes R' Frank, that there are natural olive trees in Gan Eden. And, it follows, olive oil brought miraculously by the clouds from Gan Eden could be kosher for the menorah even though, as R' Chaim Brisker says, oil that appears miraculously in a jug is not kosher for the menorah. (Har Zvi Ha'chadash Al Ha'Torah)

"But the work [i.e., the donations] was enough for all the work, to do it -- and there was extra."
(36:7)

R' Yoel Teitelbaum z"l (1887-1979; the Satmar Rebbe) asks: Was it "enough" or was there extra? Furthermore, if there was extra, why did Hashem inspire Bnei Yisrael to bring too much rather than just enough? Generally, our Sages say, Hashem does not perform wonders for no purpose!

He answers: The midrash relates that Moshe asked Hashem, "What should we do with the leftovers?" Hashem answered, "Make a home for the commandments." The commentary Yefeh To'ar writes that this refers to building a yeshiva. Why was it necessary to build a yeshiva in conjunction with the building of the mishkan? The Satmar Rebbe explains that the mishkan is a place where the Shechinah can rest upon a person. However, this requires preparation, and that preparation is Torah

study.

Only if there was a yeshiva next to the mishkan could the mishkan fulfill its purpose. Thus, the Satmar Rebbe concludes, the donations were "enough" only because there was enough left over to build a yeshiva also. (Divrei Yoel)

Memories of Yerushalayim

R' Ben-Zion Yadler z"l (1871-1962; Maggid / preacher of Yerushalayim), writes in his memoir, B'tuv Yerushalayim, about R' Shmuel Salant z"l (1816-1909), who served as rabbi of Yerushalayim for 70 years.

Despite his genius and his dedication to Torah study, he was extremely involved with people, so much so that even after he was appointed Rabbi of Yerushalayim, the people called him, "Reb Shmuelke," and not, "The Rabbi."

His great patience can barely be described. Once, he gave a strong rebuke to a merchant who behaved in an inappropriate way, and he prohibited people from purchasing from the man until he repented. The merchant responded forcefully and with shouts, saying that he would break the rabbi's windows if the decree was not reversed.

R' Shmuel answered patiently, "Do you think I will stand by quietly? I will immediately send for a glazier and have new windows installed."

I remember [R' Yadler continues] that my mother, my teacher, sold flour for Pesach, and there was one merchant who owed her 20 Napoleons [a type of currency] and refused to pay. The man was a powerful person and even the bet din could not extract the debt from him.

After hearing my mother's arguments, R' Shmuel turned to the man forcefully, "Why do you refuse to pay the 30 Napoleons that you owe her for flour?"

"I owe her only 20!" the man shouted. "Why are you saying 30?"

In this way, R' Shmuel, in his wisdom, extracted a confession. Immediately, R' Shmuel said, "I give you until this time tomorrow to pay." The next day, the man did not come at the appointed time, so R' Shmuel sent him a message: "Know that I have never started something and not completed it. If you do not bring the money, I will send my assistant to announce that all of your merchandise is not kosher and that you may not be counted in a minyan." When the baker heard the rabbi's words, he immediately appeared with the money.

This was R' Shmuel's way: There was a time to draw people close with love and patience, and there

was a time for forcefulness intended to instill fear and to strengthen the Torah and mitzvah observance.

The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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